

week. They are claiming the exact same number can either be a total catastrophe or a smashing success. I guess it depends on whether Democrats are in power. So much for science without politics.

Here is how the Washington Post put it:

The accelerating speed of the [vaccine] program undercuts assertions by some Biden advisers that they were left no plan by the Trump administration, and suggests they need only to keep their feet on the pedal to clear the bar they set for themselves.

Yesterday, Mr. Becerra was asked about increasing vaccinations in the months ahead. Here is what he said: "I first have to be sworn in to give you a timeline." Perhaps that is like the time the Speaker of the House famously said she had to pass a bill before the public could learn what was in it.

The new administration campaigned heavily on having a new master plan to fight the pandemic. Well, now they are in office, President Biden has said: "[T]here's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months," and his administration is apparently content to maintain the same vaccine pace they actually inherited.

Let's talk about Congress's role in the pandemic relief. Our Democratic colleagues spent last summer and fall using the legislative filibuster to delay the next rescue package until after the election. Now, that would be the same tool that some Senate Democrats now suddenly say they oppose, as if they hadn't leaned on it liberally over the last 6 years.

But, finally, last month, they let us act. We passed another package totaling nearly \$900 billion in urgent relief. We provided more than \$80 billion to help K-12 schools, \$280 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, billions more for Federal unemployment insurance supplements, nutrition and rental assistance, and direct cash aid and massive new investments in purchasing and distributing vaccines. Some of that money has already gone out the door. Other portions are still unspent—a massive, historic, almost trillion-dollar package that was passed into law just 5 weeks ago.

Since last March, Washington, DC, has spent a historic amount of money standing up one of the most enormous policy responses by any government to any emergency that the world has ever seen. Nobody thinks the support has been perfect—far from it—but it has been historic and strong.

For example, a nonpartisan study in November showed that because of the historic emergency legislation passed through Congress, American personal income was actually—listen to this—higher in September than it had been before the pandemic.

Last month, Larry Summers, President Clinton's Treasury Secretary and President Obama's NEC Director, confirmed that relative to our underlying

economy, our multiple rescue packages have brought American household income all the way back to a level that equals or even exceeds what he would expect if we weren't in a crisis.

So, to be clear, nobody thinks our bipartisan work fighting this pandemic is completely finished. Nobody is arguing that. And we all understand that overall national statistics do not explain away the terrible struggles facing many families. But experts and economists from the left to the right agree: Any further action should be smart and targeted, not just an imprecise deluge of borrowed money that would direct huge sums toward those who don't need it.

That is why the new administration's first draft of their sprawling proposal misses the mark, and press reports make clear this is not just a Republican view. Multiple Democratic Senators agree that it is not the right path forward.

So as the \$900 billion package from 5 weeks ago continues to come online and as the remaining needs continue to come into focus, Republicans will be ready and eager to continue bipartisan discussions about smart steps forward for the American people. Bipartisan action helped our Nation endure the last year. Bipartisan action helped us turn the corner, and it will be smart, bipartisan actions that help us finish the fight.

NOMINATION OF JANET LOUISE YELLEN

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now on a related matter, this afternoon, the Senate will confirm Dr. Janet Yellen, the former Chair of the Federal Reserve, to serve as President Biden's Secretary of the Treasury. Her speedy confirmation will contrast sharply with the way the Senate Democratic minority handled many of the last President's key Cabinet nominations 4 years ago.

Secretary Mnuchin had to sit through a stunt where Senate Democrats literally boycotted his committee hearing. He was not confirmed until mid-February.

Dr. Yellen came out of committee on a unanimous vote and will begin to work 5 days after the inauguration. That is even faster than Secretary Geithner's nomination in 2009 in the teeth of a financial crisis.

This certainly isn't because Dr. Yellen's or President Biden's economic policy views have unanimous support here in the Senate. I expect we will have no shortage of spirited policy discussions with Dr. Yellen in the months ahead, especially if some Democrats keep trying to use this historic emergency as a pretext—a pretext to push through permanent far-left policy changes.

The 50 Senators on our side have great confidence in our pro-job, pro-worker vision that helped build the greatest job market in living memory.

But the simple fact is that, when the American people elect a President and when the President selects qualified and mainstream people for key posts, the whole Nation deserves for them to be able to assemble their team.

I will be voting to confirm Dr. Yellen today. I look forward to working together on pro-growth policies that will help rebuild the thriving economy for American workers that was in place just 1 year ago.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Janet Louise Yellen, of California, to be Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO CAPITOL CUSTODIAL STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, it is good to see the Senator from Hawaii as the Presiding Officer.

Madam President, I rise today to honor workers in this building—something that Senator HIRONO does every day of her life in this job—workers in this building who are too often overlooked but whose work is essential to the functioning of our government: our Capitol custodial staff.

In the days after the January 6 insurrection, when domestic terrorists stormed this building, we rightly honored Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman and many other Capitol police officers who put their lives on the line to protect all of us, to protect our democratic process, and, essentially, to protect our democracy.

Last week, I joined a bipartisan group of colleagues in introducing legislation to award Officer Goodman the